

10 May 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Published Comment on JPRS

Paul:

The attached newsletter has just been received by a staff linguist who is an SFL member. We doubt that it will generate further public comment, but with this sort of thing you never know. Therefore, I am passing it to you for your information.

On 28 February a delegation of ATA (American Translators Association) and SFL (Society of Federal Linguists) met with [redacted] Chief of our JPRS field office in the Broyhill Building. The group had requested an interview "to discuss JPRS policies and practices." The meeting progressed amicably enough, and the delegation seemed favorably impressed at the range of rates paid by JPRS to its contract translators... (Naturally enough such complaints as we have had over the years tend to focus on the starting rate for new unproven contractors and for those who don't show the skill, speed or reliability which bring the higher rates.)

At the conclusion of the meeting, William B. Cramer of the SFL asked [redacted] if JPRS was still affiliated with the Department of Commerce. [redacted] replied that JPRS was part of CIA. Mr. Cramer asked if he could print this, and was told he could.

[redacted] It was [redacted] impression that some of the visitors already knew of the CIA connection.

The SFL published the attached account in a special supplement to its April-May newsletter as a result of this meeting. It is critical (and distorted) as might be expected of a professional organ which is trying to increase rates paid to translators. We do not know the total memberships of either the SFL or ATA, but they are not large. The ATA, which has membership in Pennsylvania, has been in touch with Senator Schweiker about JPRS over the past 18 months and the Senator's office has been in touch with OLC.

ATA/SFL criticism of JPRS is not new, and has so far been of little consequence. We will remain alert to their activity regarding JPRS and ensure that in fact there are no grounds for embarrassment to the Agency. We initiated a review of the JPRS rate structure last month to make certain that we are meeting Agency and USG standards and expect to complete this review in the near future. [redacted] by the way, has just announced his STAT intention to take a Discontinued Service Retirement, and we are in the process of selecting his replacement.



STAT

Director  
Foreign Broadcast Information Service

Attachment:

Special Supplement to the SFL Newsletter (April-May 1974)

cc: Assistant to the Director [redacted]  
Office of Legislative Counsel [redacted]  
DDI Security Officer [redacted]

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Special Supplement to the SFL NEWSLETTER -- Vol. 44, No. 4-5 (April-May 1974)

## ATA AND SFL COMMITTEE REPORTS ON VISITS TO JPRS, HARRY DIAMOND LABS, AFSOME, CONGRESSMAN WALDIE'S OFFICE; NEW SFL LEGAL COUNSEL PINPOINTS PROBLEM AREAS

Editor's Note: Much news of significant professional interest was brought to light at the SFL general meeting of March 27, 1974, on the subject of "Translators Within the Federal Bureaucracy - Problems and Solutions." As time did not permit a full discussion of the information revealed, some of the participants have been asked to submit detailed reports as follows:

### REPORT ON VISIT TO NEW JPRS HEAD AND HARRY DIAMOND LABORATORIES

by Brigitta Richman

Member, Economic Committee, American Translators Association (ATA)

Members of the ATA Economic Committee and the SFL Professional Committee paid a visit to Mr. Ned Cohen, Chief of the Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), on 28 February 1974. Mr. Cohen is the successor to Mr. Gustav Blackett. The visitors wanted to discuss various pertinent issues such as rates, complaints, etc.

Mr. Cohen received the visitors but made a categorical announcement without provocation that he was not providing access to his files or records. Mr. Cohen also quoted highly inflated production statistics, e.g., a "professional translator" should be able to produce up to 150,000 words a month. Hourly production figures of 1200-1500 words are not uncommon, he said, and anybody doing less than 500 words an hour 'will starve and does not belong in this business.' Mr. Cohen also quoted sample rates: Starting rates of \$11-13 for most languages; rates for scientific materials of \$15-20, with an average of \$17-18.

In answer to a direct question, Mr. Cohen said that there was no listed rate structure, nor would he supply one to the visitors. He went on to say that all the information he provided was strictly off the top of his head and that there was no literature on JPRS available for distribution.

The visitors presented six letters of complaint (five unsigned, one signed - from a full-time Federal translator), detailing the unhappy experiences these people have had with JPRS. Mr. Cohen commented that these complaints were not representative and that his office was always available to any of his translators if they had questions or complaints. Mr. Cohen stated that he considers his relationship with the translators working for JPRS as a two-way street. The visitors are not convinced that this is so. They are wondering why Mr. Cohen refuses to make his roster of translators available, since he claims to have such good relations with his translators.

Upon a direct question, Mr. Cohen admitted that JPRS has been a CIA-run operation for years, and that its Commerce Dept. affiliation is only a "cover." [Editor's Note: The reader is free to speculate on the implications of this.]

LOG NOTE -- A/Chief, JPRS

1 March 1974

1. I was visited on the afternoon of 28 February by the following individuals, representing the American Translators Association (ATA), to discuss JPRS policies and practices: Mrs. Brigitta M. Richman, member of the Economic Committee, American Translators Association (ATA) -- a German free-lance translator herself; Mr. William B. Cramer, an official of the Society of Federal Linguists -- a translator for the Navy Department and a former JPRS contractor; and William Himel, a retired Government translator and vice president of Society of Federal Linguists.

2. I briefed them on JPRS activities and our present higher rate structure, knowing that that was the main complaint of ATA over the years against JPRS. They did express some surprise at the present wide range of our rates, although they still felt that all translators, not just those working for JPRS, were grossly underpaid.

3. The main thrust of their presentation dealt with: (1) The relatively low rates of JPRS, especially for beginners and the unexperienced -- they claim the ATA is pressing for a minimum of \$15/1000 words. (2) The irregularity of JPRS work, and our insistence on expeditious handling of assignments. (3) The inability of the average translator who opts for high quality work to produce the heavy volume needed to guarantee him a decent income. (4) They cited few complaints received by ATA from disaffected JPRS contractors concerning the above points or their general unhappiness over the way JPRS had handled them. Of course these complaints were anonymous.

4. The whole session was rather inconclusive -- they did not have a program to put across, and they did not learn anything from me that they did not already know. It might have just been an attempt on the part of the ATA to size me up as the successor to Blackett, but I thought they represented the ATA rather poorly. At the end of the meeting Mr. Cramer did ask if we were still with Commerce, and I told him of our Agency association -- of course he must have been witting all along -- but none of the three made any comment on my admission, which leads me to believe that they either knew it or strongly suspected it. (cc: Chairman/JPRC; O/Director; Admin/Pinston)